



February 25, 2015

By Hand and email

Carlos Rubinstein, Chairman  
Bech Bruun  
Kathleen Jackson  
Texas Water Development Board  
1700 Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chairman Rubinstein, Board Members and Staff,

Environmental Stewardship is concerned that we use our surface and groundwater resources in a way that benefits the State of Texas and its citizens while sustainably conserving and protecting these valuable resources. To that end, I am providing you with a paper that we have recently completed that reviews several studies by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), along with some original research sponsored by Environmental Stewardship. The paper points to empirical data that indicates that there may be a significant amount of water that drains from the Colorado River above Bastrop into the Simsboro Aquifer. According to an LCRA gain-loss study, the Colorado River, which is an overall "gaining stream" in the lower basin, is a "losing stream" in the segment where the river and the Simsboro aquifer intersect between Austin and Bastrop, Texas. Our interest is to call attention to this situation because we believe it points to several public policy issues that require discussion and decisions regarding the management of both of these water resources.

Policy Issue 1: Are we going to preserve and protect environmental flows in the Colorado River that provide *essential life-support flow* for the river, especially during drought and extreme drought?

Policy Issue 2: Are we going to recognize this connection between groundwater and surface water and take steps to *conjunctively manage* these two resources as we make decisions and adopt practices regarding the use and conservation of these resources?

We look forward to the opportunity to have discussions with you regarding these policy issues and what steps are appropriate given the state of our understanding of the science, and the policy and regulatory constraints we face in Texas. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Box  
Executive Director  
Environmental Stewardship

Attachment: Box, Steve. February 23, 2015 Environmental Stewardship. Colorado River - Simsboro Aquifer Connection.

cc: Judge Paul Pape, Bastrop County  
Judge Paul Fischer, Lee County

Environmental Stewardship is a charitable nonprofit organization whose purposes are to meet current and future needs of the environment and its inhabitants by protecting and enhancing the earth's natural resources; to restore and sustain ecological services using scientific information; and to encourage public stewardship through environmental education and outreach. We are a Texas nonprofit 501(c) (3) charitable organization. For more information visit our website at <http://www.envirostewardship.org/>.